

*The Head of the Serpent bruised by the Seed
of the Woman.*

A
S E R M O N
O N
G E N E S I S iii. 15.

Occasioned by the DEATH of

Mrs. MARTHA GIFFORD,

Late Wife of the REVEREND

Mr. ANDREW GIFFORD,

Preached *January 14, 1711.*

By *JOHN GILL.*

L O N D O N:

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of *Castle-Alley*, near the *Royal-Exchange*. MDCCXXIII.

[Price Six Pence.]

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of the Woman.

A
SERMON

ON
GEN. iii. 15.



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[Price Six Pence]

T O
JOHN WARE, Esq;

ONE OF HIS

Majesty's Justices of the Peace,

FOR THE

County of BUCKS,

And the rest of the

Relations of the Deceased :

THIS

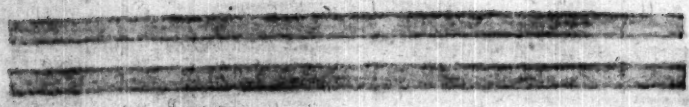
DISCOURSE

Is humbly DEDICATED,

By their sincere Friend,

and Servant,

JOHN GILL.



TO
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ONE OF HIS

Majesty's Justices of the Peace

County
UCKS.
And the rest of the



Relations of the Deceased:

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DISCOURSE

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JOHN GILL

at

(1)
G E N. iii. 15.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

THIS Book of *Genesis* is, in order, the first of the inspired writings, and gives us an account of the first principles of all things: It informs us that the world had a beginning, and is the produce of a wise and powerful agent, and not the effect of blind chance, or owing to the confused jumbling of fortuitous atoms, contrary to the notions of many philosophers. In this we learn who the first man was; and when, and by whom the several parts of the earth were peopled: It gives us the best light into the rise of the first and early monarchies, about which there has been so much contest, and leads us into the true origin of moral evil a-

B

mong

mong men ; concerning which there has been so much dispute in the world. In short, it is the fountain of all sound divinity, true history and philosophy.

The three first *Chapters* especially, are an epitome both of nature and grace, and give us, in one view, the rise, ruin, and restoration of the world. They may be considered as the text, on which all the following parts of scripture are the comments and expositions.

The first *Chapter* furnishes us with a most divine and beautiful account of the creation, in the order of six days work ; by which we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God ; so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear ; in which the glory of the divine power and wisdom is so abundantly manifest. We learn from hence, that the heavens and the earth were made out of nothing, and not from any pre-existent matter ; that the earth was without form, and void, a rude and undigested chaos, full of darkness and confusion, until the Spirit of God^a brooded upon the face of the waters, and brought it into a beautiful form and order : Here we are informed when God first commanded light to break forth ; when, by a firmament, he divided the superior and infe-

^a As the hen, or any other fowl, broods upon its eggs or young, which is the sense of the word *brooded*, according to the Jewish writers ; as R. Sal. Jarchi, R. Abn Ezra, R. David Ben Gerson, in Gen. 1. 21.

rior waters from each other; when he made the sea, and caused the dry land to appear; when he clothed the earth with grass, and filled it with fruitful trees; when he bespangled the heavens with stars, and hung up his two great lights, the sun and moon; the one to rule the day, the other the night; when he filled the several parts of the universe with proper inhabitants; the air with fowl, the sea with fish, and the earth with cattle and creeping things; and after all, as the crown and master-piece of all his works, that he made man after his image and likeness; placed him over all the works of his hands, and put all creatures in subjection to him.

The *second Chapter* principally treats of the happiness of man in his state of innocence; and informs us, that the Lord God allotted him an habitation in the most fertile and delightful spot of ground in all the globe, even the garden of *Eden*; which was stocked with all manner of trees, pleasant to the sight, and good for food; and gave him liberty to eat of the fruit of them all, excepting one: That the Lord brought before him every beast of the field, and fowl of the air, to give names unto them, and provided a proper help-meet for him, one that was *bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh*; which two being joined together by the Lord himself, spent their happy hours in the service of their Creator, and in their own mutual solace and delight. But then,

The *third Chapter* introduces a strange and sudden *catastrophe* of things, and opens a dark scene of wickedness and ruin; in which the just now happy pair are involved, through the cunning and subtlety of a serpent: Here we are informed which of the two he attacked; what artful methods were made use of, by which he gained his point, seduced our first parents to eat the forbidden fruit, whereby they ruined themselves and all their posterity. This brought down the just resentment of God against both the deceiver and the deceived; and all three, the serpent, the woman, and the man, are summoned to appear before him, take their trial, and receive their sentence in a judiciary way: And because the serpent was the instrument of this apostasy and rebellion, he receives his just sentence of punishment first; the account of which we have in the words of my text, and in the preceding verse.

Now, whereas the *Serpent* is represented as the contriver and author of this mischief to man, and upon him a judicial sentence, of which my text is a part, is pronounced, it will be necessary, before I proceed any further, to enquire, who we are to understand by it. I apprehend, that by the *Serpent* is meant a true and real serpent, and not the mere form and likeness of one, in which the Devil might appear for a time. This is evident from its being reckon'd among the beasts of the field,

ver. 1,

per. I. from the cunning and subtlety which is there ascribed to it^b; and more especially from the nature of the curse denounced against it in my text, and in the verse before it, which is thus expressed; *And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* All which is literally true of this creature, the serpent; it is the most detestable and loathsome of all creatures; it is a reptile upon the earth; it goes upon its belly, however upright it might be before this sentence; it feeds upon what is exceeding mean; and between this and man is an irreconcilable enmity; the sight of a serpent is disagreeable to man, and the sight of a man is as abhorrent to a serpent; the serpent's gall is poison to man, and the spittle of a man is venomous to serpents. This antipathy to serpents, in the human nature, is observed to be still more strong in the female sex; and it is averred, that the bare foot of a woman pressing a serpent's head, never so little, is immediate death to it: And though this creature may, at unawares, bite the heels of men; yet man has such an advantage over it,

^b See Matt. x. 16.

that he can easily bruise and crush its head; which it being sensible of, is most careful to cover and hide. These are things which naturalists^e say of this creature, and, if true, shew that the curse denounced, is literally fulfilled in it, and consequently that it was a real and proper serpent, which is here intended.

But then let it be observed, that not a mere serpent, or that only, is to be understood, but that as possessed and used by Satan as his instrument: This appears from its having a faculty of speaking; and more especially from its cunning and sophistic way of reasoning; nor is it rational to suppose, that human nature, in its bloom and glory, should be outwitted, seduced, and overcome by a creature so very inferior to it: Besides, the writings of the *New Testament* ascribe the seduction and ruin of man to the Devil. Our Lord calls him *a murderer from the beginning*^f; and sometimes this seduction is attributed to him, under the name of the serpent^g: And it is easy to observe, that the Devil and Satan^h is called the old *Serpent*; to all which agree the sentiments of many of the *Jewish* writersⁱ; who acknowledge that Satan, whom they call

^e All these instances of satipathy are observed by the learned Mr. Joseph Mede, from naturalists, in his works, Book I. Disc. 39, p. 295. Vid. Franz. Hist. Animal. Par. IV, c. 1. Topsel's History of Serpents, p. 604, 606.

^f John viii. 44.

^g 2 Cor. xi. 2.

^h Rev. xii. 9. and

xx. 2.

ⁱ Zohar in Gen. iii. fol. 127, 1, 2. Targum Jon. in Gen. iii. 6. Vid. Aben Ezra in Gen. iii. 3.

Samael, and the angel of death, names proper enough for him, was in the Serpent, and was the cause of man's ruin, and is principally designed in the curse.

This clears the justice of God, and shews that the punishment of the serpent is not unreasonable; since it was made use of by Satan as an instrument to bring about his wicked designs. If the earth was cursed for man's sake, why might not this creature be cursed for Satan's sake? who had employ'd it to so vile a purpose. The punishing the instrument, or what is necessary, as well as the principal, does more discover God's detestation of the fact for which they are punished, as may be observed in other instances^h. But then,

Let it not be thought that the instrument only was punished, and the principal suffered to escape: No, this sentence of punishment here pronounced, was chiefly designed against Satan, and to be inflicted on him; and every part of it is applicable to him; he is of all creatures accursed of God; he is now cast down from the realms of light and glory, in which he dwelt, and will never be able to rise more and regain his former place and dignity; he lives not upon *angels food*, as formerly, but upon earthly, impure, and sordid lusts. Between him and the woman's seed is an implacable enmity, which will issue in his everlast-

^h Exod. xxi. 28. Lev. xx. 15.

ing ruin ; whatever feeble attempts he may be able to make to defend himself; and destroy the kingdom of Christ. But on these things I have already more largely insisted; in a treatise¹ published to the world some time ago. I go on to observe, that

These words, *I will put enmity, &c.* are spoken by a divine Person, who is called the Lord God, at whose voice *Adam* trembled, and whose presence he dreaded ; by whom we are to understand, either God absolutely; or personally consider'd ; if as personally consider'd, then either the first or second person in the Trinity is designed. I am inclined to think that the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in an human form to *Adam*, and spoke with an articulate voice to him ; for *no man hath seen God the Father at any time ; ye have neither heard his voice at any time, says^k Christ, nor seen his shape.* It is a rule that, perhaps, will meet with few exceptions in the *Old Testament* ; that whenever any visible appearance of *Jehovah* was made, any shape assumed, or articulate voice uttered, it is to be understood of the second person ; who, in the fulness of time, was to be made flesh, and dwell among us ; and, indeed, who so proper to carry on a judicial process against these criminals? before whom should they take their trials?

¹ The prophecies of the *Old Testament* respecting the *Messiah*, literally fulfilled in Jesus, *ch. i. p. 5, 6, &c.*

^k John v. 37.

and from whom should they receive the sentence of condemnation, but from him who is the Judge of all the earth? *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father: And who so fit to bring the first tidings of grace and salvation to fallen man, than he who was to be the great Prophet in Israel?* By this means the gospel of our salvation *first began to be spoken by the Lord in the garden of Eden, as it afterwards was in the land of Judea, in such a manner, and with such power and authority, as it never was before or since.* Add to all this, that the paraphrases antiently used by the Jewish church, seem to incline to this sense; for the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan read the eighth Verse thus: *And they heard the Voice of the word of the Lord God walking in the garden, &c.* And the Jerusalem Targum reads the ninth Verse after this manner: *And the word of the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, &c.* And both Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase the tenth Verse thus: *And he said, the voice of thy word I heard in the garden, &c.* By the word of the Lord, they mean the essential word, the Messiah, who walked in the garden, called to Adam, and whose voice he heard. Now it is the very same person that continues talking with

¹ John v. 22, 23.

Adam and *Eve*, who, in my text, directs his discourse to the serpent, nor ought it to be any objection that he is here introduced speaking of himself, under the character of the seed of the woman, that should bruise the serpent's head, since this is not unusual, as appears from *John* iv. 10, &c.

The principal thing designed in my text, is the victory the Messiah should obtain over Satan. The enmity put between the woman and the serpent, between his seed and hers breaking out into open war, was to issue in an entire conquest over the serpent and his seed, in which the Messiah would interest all his people. This, and only this, could be a support to *Adam* in his present state and condition. We are not to imagine, to use the words of an ingenious modern writer^m, we “hear God foretelling, with great solemnity, “a very trivial accident that should sometimes “happen in the world: That serpents would “be apt to bite men by the heels, and that “men would be apt to revenge themselves, “by striking them on the head. What has “this trifle to do with the loss of mankind, “with the corruption of the natural and moral world, and the ruin of all the glory and “happiness of the creation? Great comfort “it was to *Adam*, doubtless, after telling him “that his days should be short, and full of

^m *Sherlock's* use and intent of prophecy, p. 70, 71.

" misery, and his end without hope, to let
 " him know that he should now and then
 " knock a snake on the head; but not even
 " that without paying dear for his poor victo-
 " ry, for the snake should often bite him by
 " the heel. *Adam* surely could not under-
 " stand the prophesy in this sense, though
 " some of his sons have so understood it."

It is certain these were not the senti-
 ments of the old Jewish church; for the
 Paraphrases of *Jonathan* and *Jerusalem* un-
 derstand the words of the Messiah; the for-
 mer of which says, *There shall be a healing for*
the heel in the days of the King Messiah; and
 much to the same purpose says the latter.
 The word אֵל, which is rendered *it*, is one of
 the names of God, and is so used in *Psal.* cii.
 27. *Isai.* xlviii. 12. and well agrees with Christ,
 who is the unchangeable, omnipotent, and
 eternal HE, the אֵל, who is the same ye-
 sterday, to day, and for ever. The work ascri-
 bed to him, which is the bruising the serpent's
 head, is what no other but the Messiah was
 to do, or could do, and is refer'd to in *Psal.*
 cx. 6. which *Psal.* belongs solely to the Mes-
 siah; where it is said of him, *He shall wound*
the heads over many countries; which may be
 render'd, *He shall wound the head over a large*
country; or, *he shall wound him on the head*
who is over a large country; which can be no
 other than Satan, the god and prince of this
 world. Besides, in the volume of the book, by

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reparat. &c.; at the head of the book, in the beginning of it, *it is written of Christ*, that he should *do the will of God*; which was to destroy Satan, the old serpent, with his works, and deliver sinful miserable man out of his hands, and can refer to no other prophesy than this, which stands at the head and front of the Bible; from the giving forth of which, the Messiah has *been spoken of by the mouth of all God's holy prophets, which have been since the world began*. Nor can it be any just objection to his being the seed of the woman; that the word *seed* is a collective word, since it is often used to design a single person; as in *Gen. iv. 25. and xv. 2. and xxi. 13*. From all which I conclude, that this is an intimation, and the first intimation of the Messiah, and of his work and office.

The manner in which this hint is given, is worthy of observation. It is commonly said, that these words contain the first promise of the Messiah, and of grace and salvation by him to sinful man; but it ought to be observed, that the words are not spoken to man, but to the serpent; not by way of promise to *Adam*, but by way of threatening to the devil: 'Tis true, indeed, *Adam* was present, and heard what drop'd from the lips of his Judge, which revived his fainting spirits, and trembling heart, and sprung a dawn of light and joy in him, and laid a solid foundation for faith and hope, as to everlasting salvation.

These

These words contain a declaration of secret enmity between several parties, breaking out into open war, and the event of it.

The declaration of this mutual enmity is thus expressed: *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; i. e. I will put between you, and raise up among you an implacable and irreconcilable hatred, which shall not lie secretly burning in your breasts, but shall break out into open acts of hostility, one against another; there shall be a perpetual war between you. Now in this battle there are two pair of combatants.*

The one is the serpent and the woman; who is designed by the serpent, has been observed already: By the *woman*, cannot be meant the church, who is sometimes so called, both for her weakness and fruitfulness in her present state. Could this allegorical sense be admitted of, some passages in the *twelfth Chapter of the Revelations* would serve as a proper comment on our text; particularly *ver. 4, 13, 14, 15, 17.*

But this mystical sense is not suitable; the text designs some certain woman, literally understood, *האשה* *that woman*, by way of emphasis: Some say, the virgin *Mary*, that famous woman, the mother of Christ, who is said to be *made of a woman*; a woman that both was mother and virgin at one and the same time, who, for the sake of him whom she bore, is
blessed

blessed among women; and upon that account blessed by all generations. But rather by this woman, we are to understand *Eve*, the wife of *Adam*, the woman that was then present, who had beguiled her husband, being seduced by the serpent; the woman into whose affections he had ingratiated himself, and with whom he had lately so familiarly conversed: This woman, seeing her self imposed on, and seduced by him, and her self and posterity ruined, is filled with hatred to him; which must be no small mortification to that proud spirit, to have the weak woman opposed, as his match.

The other pair of combatants are, the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the woman.

By the seed of the serpent, may be meant either evil angels, or wicked men, or both. Evil angels may truly be called the seed of the devil, since they are of the same nature and principles with him; they are his angels, he is the prince of them; they move at his orders, and obey his commands; and these bear not only a secret grudge, but keep up an open war against Christ and his saints. Wicked men also may properly enough be called his seed; the devil is their father, and they are his children; they imitate him, they do his works, and are called after his name, *"Serpents, and generation of vipers."* They hate Christ and

"Matt. xxii. 123."

his

his people, and persecute them that are after the Spirit. This has always been, and ever will be, the case, as long as this present state of things continues.

By the seed of the woman, is not designed her immediate posterity, especially Cain; for whatever hopes she might have entertained at his birth, that she had brought forth the Messiah, the promised seed; which some conclude from her words, in Chap. iv. 1. *I have gotten a man from the Lord*; which they chuse to render, *I have gotten a man, the Lord*; and which Jonathan, the Targumist, paraphrases thus; *I have gotten a man, the angel of the Lord*; I say, whatever hopes of this kind she had encouraged in her self at this time, it appeared plainly afterwards that he was of the seed of the serpent, a child of the devil. Nor by the seed of the woman are we to understand the whole world, though, 'tis true, that *Eve* is the mother of all living; upon which account, *Adam* gave her the name of *Eve*. Yet many of her natural seed and offspring are children of disobedience, who are taken and led captive by the devil, at his will, and in whole minds he works effectually; whatever aversion they may have to him, as he is represented as a frightful and horrible spirit, yet they have none to him, as an impure and wicked one; they love his works, and shew themselves to be his children, and will be cursed companions with him in everlasting flames. Nor can I see any

any reason why the elect of God should be here called the seed of the woman; 'tis true, believers are called the seed of *Abraham*, in a spiritual sense, inasmuch as they are partakers of the same faith, and tread in the same steps of obedience: They are also called the seed of the church frequently^o; and *Jerusalem*, which is above, is said to be the mother of them all, because they are born in her, and nursed up at her side; but they are never called the seed of *Eve*, in any particular and distinct sense from the rest of the world, the grace by which they are regenerated, not descending to them from her by natural generation. I conclude then, that by the seed of the woman, is meant the Messiah: I have given my reasons already; 'tis the same seed whom God afterwards promised to *Abraham*, more clearly and distinctly, saying, ^o *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*; which the apostle ^a *Paul* directly applies to Christ. It will not now be improper to consider in what sense Christ is called the seed of the woman.

Some think, he is so called because of his birth of a virgin, since he is said to be the seed of the woman, and not of the man; which agrees with what is said of Jesus, that he was *made of a woman*: But the phrase does not seem to design the miraculous conception and

^o *Isai.* xliii. 5. and xliv. 3. and lix. 21, &c.
^a *Gal.* iii. 16.

^p *Gen.*

birth of the Messiah; at least, it was not so understood by *Eve*, if it can be thought, as some learned men are of opinion, as has been before observed, that she had entertained some hopes and faith too, that she had got the Messiah; which she could not, had she known that he was to be born of a virgin; nor does it appear that there were any intimations of this kind, at least, any clear ones, until the times of *Isaiah*, who prophesied thus, *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* It may be, this phrase, *the seed of the woman*, is only designed to express the truth of Christ's incarnation, the reality of his human nature, that he should partake of the same flesh and blood with us; and, perhaps, the peculiarity of the expression may intend his assumption of a nature, and not a person; for Christ assumed not an human person, but an human nature, which is called that *Holy Thing born of the virgin*, *the seed of Abraham*; and as here *the seed of the woman*. If Christ had taken to himself an human person, there must be two persons in him, which was the monstrous and absurd error of *Nestorius*, bishop of *Constantinople*, who lived in the *fifth Century*, and was condemned by several councils. The human nature of Christ never subsisted of it self, which is proper to personality; it always was in union

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with the second Person, subsisted in him, and was never separate from him since it had an existence. Besides, if Christ, as man, is a separate and distinct Person, his actions and obedience, as such, would be of service to none but that single person; whereas, through Christ's assumption of an human nature in personality with himself, as the Son of God, all his actions, obedience, and sufferings as man, have a divine virtue and efficacy put into them, which renders the benefit of them communicable to as many as he pleases.

But to proceed: This phrase, *the seed of the woman*, seems to be used on purpose to comfort *Eve*, under her present sorrowful circumstances; that though she had beguiled her husband, through the seduction of the serpent, and was the cause of his, her own, and their posterity's ruin; yet one descending from her, of her seed and offspring, should avenge this wrong done her, by bruising the serpent's head, and thereby deliver her from his power, and save her with an everlasting salvation. The apostle refers to this, when he says, *And Adam was not deceived; but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression, notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing*; which last part of the text I would chuse to render thus, *Notwithstanding she shall be saved*, or

^f 1 Tim. ii. 13, 14.

* See Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, Part I, p. 24, 25: and the Notes of his learned editor Mr. Bedford.

there shall be salvation for her, διὰ τῆς γεννησέας
vias, by the birth of a Son; that is, by the pro-
 mised seed, the seed of the woman, the Lord
 Jesus Christ. Take the words in the other
 reading, and they furnish out no good sense
 at all, neither with respect to temporal or eter-
 nal salvation: If they are to be understood of
 temporal salvation in child-bearing, this is
 not true; since many good women, as *Rachel*,
 and others, have died in child-bed; nor can
 they be understood in any sound sense of eter-
 nal salvation, seeing bearing of children can
 never be thought to be either the cause or con-
 dition, or means of that, and which, as is by
 a learned man rightly observed, would be small
 comfort to those who bear none; but read the
 words, as I have observed they may be read,
 there is a glare of gospel light in them, and
 give us reason to conclude, that *Eve*, who
 was first in the transgression, was nevertheless
 saved, through the Messiah, and that all other
 women, who believe in the same glorious
 Person, shall be saved also. What a mortifi-
 cation must this be to the devil to hear, that
 though he had drawn the woman into the
 transgression, yet she should be saved from it;
 that though, through his temptations, she had
 been the cause of man's ruin, yet there should
 be one who would spring from her, that would
 be the Author of salvation; and that the seed
 of that woman, whom he had deceived, should
 be the ruin of him. Now between Satan and

his seed; evil angels and wicked men, on the one side, and Christ the seed of the woman, and the Head of the elect, on the other, there is a rooted enmity. The serpent and his seed hate Christ; these proud spirits could not bear that the human nature should be advanced to union with the Son of God, and to be exalted above that of theirs; this is thought, by some, to be that which occasioned their apostasy from God. As soon as they had an intimation of this, they broke away from him in rage and wrath; and with a disdainful pride, left their first habitations of bliss and glory, and fell into mutiny and rebellion against their Maker, and into plots and conspiracies to hinder the salvation of man by the incarnate God; though all in vain, and to no purpose. As soon as the man Christ Jesus was born, Satan stirred up *Herod* to seek the young Child's life to destroy it; and when he was grown up to the estate of man, he had the front to solicit him to destroy himself; he put the *Jews* more than once upon stoning of him, and, at last, put it into the heart of *Judas Iscariot* to betray him; by which means he attained his end, so as to bring him to death, though it issued in the destruction of himself. The same hatred and malice are to be observed in all his seed. On the other hand, Christ, the seed of the woman, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity, cannot but hate all the workers of it; whose trade and business it is to commit sin: He hates

Satan

of Mrs. MARTHA GIFFORD. 21

Satan and all his followers, maintains a war against them, in which he is the mighty Conqueror; all his enemies will fall into his hands, to whom he'll say, *Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

This leads me to consider the issue and event of this mutual enmity, discord and war; the Messiah, the seed of the woman, shall bruise the serpent's head; and the serpent, the devil, shall bruise the Messiah's heel; a vast disparity this; great are the advantages of the one over the other. I proceed to enquire,

What may be meant by *bruising* the serpent's head. Perhaps, what the author of the *epistle* to the *Hebrews* says*, will give us some light into it, when he observes, that *forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.* What is expressed in metaphorical terms in my text, is, in this scripture, signified without a figure; the bruising of the serpent's head is the destruction of the devil himself; by which must be understood, not an annihilation of his being; for though that is in the power of the woman's seed, yet he'll preserve him, as a monument of his wrath and vengeance, to be a tormentor of others, and to be punished himself; there-

* Heb. ii. 14.

fore not an annihilation of him; but a destruction of his power, authority, dominion, and works, is intended. It may be, a passage of the apostle *Jabn's* may instruct us in this matter, yet more clearly, when he says, *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* The works of the devil are sinful works, which he, in all ages, has been plotting and contriving, soliciting men unto, and engaging them in. Christ was manifested in human nature to destroy these works; that is, to put away the sins of his people, make reconciliation for them, finish them, and make an end of them, by the sacrifice of himself; and thereby save them from them, and from the wrath of God, which they deserve; in doing which, he has bruised the serpent's head, and confounded a design of his, which was to involve them in all the miseries of an eternal death, from which Christ has secured them; for he has *abolished death*, another of the devil's works, and *brought life and immortality to light by the gospel.*

There is a threefold death, which sin is the cause of, and has introduced into the world, and which are the just wages of it, a corporal, spiritual, or moral, and an eternal one; all which are, in some sense, abolished by Christ. Though his people, whilst in a state of nature, are *dead in trespasses and in sins*, yet he having

^c 1 John iii. 8.

procured spiritual life for them, puts it into them, preserves and secures it, so as they shall never die more, in that sense. They die, indeed, a corporal death; they are not exempted from the general decree of heaven, and lot of all men; they are brought to death, to the house appointed for all living. Daily instances confirm this, *Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?* But then the sting of death is taken away, the curse is removed; death is not inflicted on them as a penal evil, or by way of punishment for sin, that being fully satisfied for by Christ. Death is one of the believer's privileges; it frees them from the troubles of this world, and lets them into the glories of another; wherefore, *"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; they rest from their labours, and their works follow them."* Nor shall they always abide under the power of death; their bodies shall be raised immortal, incorruptible, and glorious; when, being re-united to their souls, they shall be received into the everlasting kingdom and glory of Christ, and spend an endless eternity with him in joy and praise; where they shall be for ever secured from the second death, which is the eternal death; *"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power."* This is all owing to Christ, the resurrection

* Zech. i. 7. * Rev. xiv. 13. * Chap. xx. 6.

and the life; who says, *He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.* This is comfortable to a believer, living and dying.

Moreover, by the head of the serpent, we are not to understand the devil singly and alone; but the whole posse of devils with him, even all the powers of darkness, all the fiends of the infernal lake, who came out in a body, and attacked the Lord of life and glory, the seed of the woman, the true Messiah, when he hung on the cross; at which time, he *spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it; which, when he had done, he ascended on high, and led captivity captive.*

Again, the head being the seat of power, which commands the body and the members of it, may here intend the power, authority, and dominion, which the devil, as the god of this world, has usurped over mankind; and has endeavoured to establish among them, and in which he arrived to a very great pitch, in the *Gentile* world; as is very evident from that universal idolatry which he spread over it, and which continued there for many hun-

¹ John xi, 25, 26.

² Col. ii. 15.

hundreds of years. There was scarce any sort of creature in the world, but he prevailed upon the Heathens to worship, even some the most mean and contemptible; for they not only worshipped the heavens, and the host of them, the sun, moon, planets, and fixed stars, and the four elements, fire, earth, air, and water, but even fishes of the sea, fowls of the air, four footed beasts, and creeping things; nay, even vegetables, trees, plants, and roots, and such as leeks and onions; which made the Poet deride them for their garden gods. Nay, the devil so far prevailed, as to obtain worship and adoration for himself, and that sometimes under the name and

¹ Vid. *Alex. ab Alex. Genali Dierum*, l. 3, c. 12. & l. 6. c. 26.

Quis nescit Volusi Bythinice qualia demens
Aegyptus portenta colat: Crocodilon adorant
Pars haec: illa pavet saturam serpentibus Ibin.
Illic caeruleos hic piscem fluminis illic
Oppida tota canem, nemo veneratur Dianam.
Porrum & caepe nefas violare & frangere moris:
O sanctas Gentes, quibus haec nascuntur in horis
Numina.

juvenat. Satyr. 15.

⁶ Παρὰ ποταμὸν ὃν οὐ φερεκύδης λαβὼν τὰς ἀπομαρτίαις ἐδεδό-
κασε αὐτῷ τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸν λεγομένῳ Ὀρσιανῷ Θεῷ, καὶ τῷ Ὀρσι-
ανῷ. *Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 1. c. 10. p. 41. Ed. Paris. L.*
Rives in Aug. de Civ. Dei. l. 14. c. 11. reports from the *Pherecydes*, of whom *Eusebius* speaks, that this god *Orsiannus*, or
Serpentinus, was the prince of the daemons, or devils, whom *Ju-*
piter cast down from heaven.

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form^a of a serpent, or in a^e real one, in remembrance of that which he had used as an

^a Ipsa novissime sacra & ritus initiationis ipsius, quibus Sebadii nomen est, testimonio esse poterunt veritati: in quibus *aureus coluber* in sinum dimittitur consecratis, & eximitur rursus ab inferioribus partibus atque imis, *Arnob.* adv. Gentes, l. 5. p. 203. Ed. Elmenhorst. Vid. *Clement. Alexandr.* admon. ad Gentes, p. 11. Ed. Paris. & *Gal. Firmic.* de error. Proph. Relig. p. 18. Ed. Oxon. & *Iustin. Martyr.* Apolog. 2. p. 70, 71. Ed. Paris. The figure of the Egyptian god *Typhon*, was in this manner: His upper part was human, his lower part was in the form of a serpent; he was represented with serpents coming out of his hands, and many others wrapping themselves about his body, *Chartar. Hist. Deorum*, p. 186. Imag. 71. *Æsculapius* was also worshipped in the form of a serpent, and is called by *Ovid*, *Phœbeus anguis*, *Metamorph.* l. 15. fab. 50. And by *Horace*, *Serpens Epidaurius*, *Serm.* l. 1. *Satyr.* 3. who, in the shape of a snake, was brought from *Epidaurus* to *Rome*, to free the city from the pestilence, *ant.* U. C. 462. Vid. *Liv.* c. 11. *Brev. & Sent. Aurel. Victor.* de illustr. viris, c. 25. The *Gemii*, which belonged to any place, city, or country, were painted in the same form. *Virgil.* *Æneid.* l. 5. v. 95. & *Servius* in ib. p. 896. Vid. *Pers.* *Satyr.* 1. v. 113.

^e Colebant enim bestias fere omnes, quas portentorum mater *Ægyptus* alebat, in his & serpentes & dracunculos, quos illi *Agathodaemonas* vocabant. *Pignorii* mens. *Isiac.* *Expos.* c. 1. p. 5. *Osiridis* subsequentis caput ornat sacra serpens in tabula ita frequens, ut in mentem veniat mirari hominum stoliditatem, qui a Deo opt. max. ita aberrarent, ut sordidum hoc animal venerarentur. Neque vero *Ægyptii* tantum huic dementiæ assines. Indi enim *Phœnices*, *Arabes*, *Babylonii*, *Poeni*, *Bacotii*, *Epirotæ*, *Sicyonii*, *Epidaurii*, *Romani*, è nostris hæretici quidam & novi orbis in colae huic insanie manus dedere. *Ibid.* c. 3. p. 23, 24. Vid. p. 26, 27, 28. & *Tomassin.* *Cecropii* votum, p. 46, 47, 55. Serpents were sacred to *Jupiter.* *Herodot.* l. 2. c. 74. and to *Æsculapius* *Pausan.* l. 2. p. 106, 136. and to *Ceres* and *Minerva.* *Chartar. Imag. Deorum*, p. 100, 162.

instru-

instrument to ruin mankind. In our Lord's time, Satan fancied he had such a power over the world, as to dispose of it at his pleasure, and therefore, in an insolent and audacious manner, offered the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, to Christ, if he would fall down and worship him. The sacrifices which he instituted, and which were not only impure and trifling, but cruel and barbarous; such as the sacrifices of human creatures themselves, is a full proof of what power and authority he had over men, and how much they were devoted to him, and infatuated by him: But now his head is bruised and crushed by the seed of the woman; he has not the authority he had in the *Gentile* world, Christ having sent his gospel thither, has dispelled the former darkness and ignorance, which

ἀδύνατον μαυρόλιν ἀργυρίζουσι Βάκχοι, ὁμοπαγία τὴν ἱερὰν ἄγοντες, καὶ τελειοῦσι τὰς κραιναίας τῆς οὐρῆς, ἀντισμύνοι τοῖς ὄφουσιν, ἐτολοῦζοντες Εὐάν. Εὐάν ἐκείνην, δὲ ἢ ἡ πλανή παρκαλίδουσι καὶ σημάς ὀργίων βακχικῶν, ὅπως ἐστὶ τετελειωμένον· αὐτίκα γὰρ καὶ τὴν ἀκροῦ τῆς Ἐξορίας οὐρῆς, τὸ ὄνομα τῷ Εὐα δασυρόμενον, ἐκμυδίσται ὅπως ἡ δὴλα. Clemens Alexandr. admon. ad Gentes, p. 9. Of the use of the word *Eua*, and the repetition of it in the *Bacchanalian* rites, when the idolaters appeared with serpents platted on their heads, see *Virgil*. *AEneid*. l. 6. v. 518, 519. l. 7. v. 388. *Pers. Satyr*. l. v. 101, 102. and *Catull*. *Epithal*. *Thetidis*. Hence *Bacchus* is called *Eoius*, *Horat*. *Carmin*. l. 2. Ode xi. v. 17.

* Vid. *Cassio*. *Comment*. l. 6. *Porphy*. de *Abstinent*. l. 2. §. 54, 55, 56. Ed. *Cantabr*. *Minut*. *Rel*. *Ostav*. p. 33. Ed. *Oxon*. *Clement*. *Alex*. admon. ad Gentes, p. 27. *Tertull*. *Apol*. c. 9. *Lactant*. de *fals*. *relig*. l. 1. c. 31. *Alex*. ab *Alex*. *Genial*. *Dierum*, l. 6. c. 26.

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has opened their eyes to see their folly and madness, and has been the means of their shaking off the devil's yoke, of delivering them from the power of Satan, and of turning them from their idols to serve the living God.

Another way by which the devil got power and authority in the *Gentile* world, and which, for some time, he secured and established, was by setting up ^h oracles in many places; the most famous of which were those of ⁱ *Jupiter Ammon* in *Egypt*, and of *Apollo*, the same with ^k *Apol-*
lyon,

^h *Herodotus* takes notice of several oracles among the *Egyptians*, where, besides that of *Jupiter Ammon*, were the oracles of *Hercules*, *Apollo*, *Minerva*, *Diana* and *Mars*, and what was had in the greatest esteem, the oracle of *Latona* in the city *Butus*, l. 2. c. 83, 152, 155. Ed. Gronov. among the *Greeks*, besides that of *Apollo Pythius* at *Delfos*, were the oracles of *Branchidas*, or *Apollo Didymus* at *Miletus*, of *Trophonius* in *Labadia*, and *Amphiaraus* in *Thebes*, and others at *Abae* and *Dodona*, l. 1. c. 48. and 2. 32. and 8. 134. The same author makes mention of the oracles of *Mars* and *Bacchus* among the *Thracians*, l. 7. c. 111. and of several among the *Ethiopians*, l. 2. c. 119. *Pausanias* observes, that there was an oracle of *Apollo Thyrsæus* at *Olympus*, upon the borders of *Lycia*, l. 7. p. 440. Ed. Hanov. of *Mercury* at *Phrygia* in *Asiatic*, ib. of *Hercules Buraeus* at *Bura*, ib. p. 449. of *Apollo Pion* at mount *Pion*, near the city *Acraephium*, which *Herodotus*, l. 8. c. 135. calls *Acraephia*, l. 9. p. 576. and of *Bacchus* in *Thrace*, ib. p. 589. with others. Besides, there was an oracle at *Delos*, one of the islands called the *Cyclades*, and another at *Patara* in *Lycia*, which is a place mentioned in *Acts* xxi. 1. and of *Apis* in *Egypt*. Vid. *Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dierum*, l. 6. c. 2.

ⁱ Concerning which, Vid. *Herodot.* l. 2. c. 55. *Pausan.* l. 3. p. 195. *Q. Curt.* l. 4. c. 7.

^k They both have their names from a word, which signifies to destroy, τὸν δὲ Ἀπόλλωνα, ὡς ἀπολύοντα ἡμᾶς ὅτι νόσον, ἢ ἀπελεύοντα ἀφ' ἡμῶν αὐτὰς, ἢ ἀπολλύντα, ταύτης τετυχημένη καὶ τῆς περσωνοείας. *Phrynicius de natura Deorum*, p. 92. Ed. Gale.

lyon, one of the names of the devil in Rev. ix. 11. at *Delphos* in Greece. These seem to be set up in imitation of the oracle of God, at which the people of *Israel* received answers by *Urim* and *Thummim*. The responses which the *Gentiles* received at their oracles, were generally delivered in a dark, intricate, and

Gale. *Macrobius* gives us the several etymologies of the name of *Apollo*, which, according to him, is the sun; and, among the rest, mentions this: *Alis cognominatum Apollinem putant, ως ἀπολλύντα τὰ ζῷα. Exanimat enim & perimit animantes, cum pestem intemperie caloris immittit.* *Saturnal.* l. 1. c. 17.

Ὁ Ἀπόλλων ἐκ τῆς ἀπώλλειν ὀνομαζέται.

Eustatbius in *Homer. Iliad.* 2.

¹ *Apollo* was called *Λοξίας*, from the intricacy and ambiguity of these oracles; *Λοξῶν δ' αὖ περικείμενον ὄντων τῶν χρησμάτων: Νιδωσι, Λοξίας ὑπόμνησαι, Phormisus de natura Deorum, p. 94. Vid. Schol. Aristophan. Plut. p. 2. Ed. Genev. fol. Clemen. Alexandr. Strom. l. 5. p. 356. where the same reason is given for this name. The common instances of these ambiguous responses are, that which was given to *Croesus*, king of *Lydia*, *Croesus Halys penetrans magnam proceret opum vim*; which left it uncertain whether he should overcome the great army of the *Persians*; or *Cyrus*, who lay on the other side of the river *Halys*, should conquer the army of the *Lydians*; also that which was delivered to *Pyrrhus*, king of *Epirus*, *Αἰο τε ἈΕακίδα Ῥωμαῖοι, vincere possi*. From whence it could not be concluded whether he who was a descendant of *AEacus* should conquer the *Romans*, or the *Romans* conquer him. Much such another oracle was that which was given out to another, *Ibis, redibis nunquam per bella petibis*, where, by placing a comma either before or after *nunquam*, the words have a different sense; and in much such a way did the old serpent impose on our first parents, when he said, *To shall be as gods, or angels*; in which sense the word is sometimes used, *Knowing good and evil*; where it is not certain whether he meant angels of light or darkness; most probably the latter, and that they should be like himself, and the rest of the apostate angels. See more instances of this ambiguous way of speaking, used in these oracles of the *Gentiles* in *Pausanias*, l. 8. p. 474, 475.*

ambigu-

ambiguous manner, so as to be sure to preserve the credit of the oracle, and the good opinion of the votary. These continued in great vogue for a time; but upon the coming of Christ, the seed of the woman, were struck dumb; the *Gentiles*^m were sensible of it, but were ignorant of the cause. The fullest proof of the ceasing of these oracles, and the reason of it, is the application of *Augustus Caesar* to the oracle at *Delphos*, after the birth of Christ, who, when he had offered some hundreds of sacrifices, urged *Apollo* to give him an answer, who should reign after him, which was the last, as it is said, he ever uttered, and was delivered in three *Greek* verses to this purposeⁿ :
 “ An *Hebrew* child that rules the blessed gods,
 “ hath commanded me to leave this dwelling,
 “ and go immediately to hell, from hencefor-
 “ ward therefore depart in silence from our
 “ altars.” ’Tis also said^o, that *Augustus* upon his return to *Rome*, set up an altar in the *Capitol*, with this inscription on it, *The altar of the first born of God*. A very considerable instance is this of the seed of the woman’s brui-

^m Vid. *Ciceron*. de Divinatione, l. 2. p. 1996. Ed. Gothofred. Porphyry. in Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 5. c. 16. p. 204, 205. And *Plutarch*. περὶ τῆς ἐκκελευστικῆς χρησμεύων.

ⁿ Πᾶς Ἑβραῖος κέλεται μέ, θεοῖς μακάρεσσιν ἀνάσσειν
 Τόνδε δόμον περιπεῖν, καὶ αἰδῆν αὐδῆς ἱερέως,
 Λοιπὸν ἀπιδί σιγῶν ἐκ βωμῶν ἡμετέρων.

Suidas in voce *Augustus*, Tom. I. p. 377. Ed. Kuster.

^o *Suidas* in ib. *Ryckius* de Capitol. Roman. c. 36. p. 427, 428.

sing the serpent's head, for by silencing his oracles, his power and authority were greatly diminished. Now in some sense may be said to be *the judgment of the Gentile world*, and *the prince of it to be cast out*, as he was out of his oracle-temples: We have an account of something of this kind in the *Acts* of the *Apostles*^p, where we read, that as the apostles went to prayer, a certain damsel, possessed with a spirit of divination; 'tis in the Greek text a spirit of *Python*, the same with^q *Apollo*, met them, which brought her masters much gain by sooth-saying; to which spirit Paul turned and said, *I command thee, in the name of Jesus*

^p Chap. xvi. 16, 17, 18.

^q *Apollo* was called *Pythius*, from the coming of the people to him, to enquire of him, and consult with him about difficult matters; his oracle is called so for the same reason; *Καὶ ἀρεθὲν τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς μαντεῖον τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι, πρῶτονόμασαν Πυθιον, ἀπὸ τοῦ δεῦρε τὸς ἀνθρώπους ἐρχομένους πυθάνεσθαι τὰ κατ' ἐαυτοῖς. Phurmutus de natura Deorum, p. 94. Vid. Schol. Aristoph. Plut. p. 6. Ed. Genev. This is rejected by Macrobius, Saturnal. l. i. c. 17. He is rather called so from the Hebrew word *Πῶθ* *Pethen*, which signifies a serpent; and *Apollo* is said to have his name *Pythius*, from his killing the serpent *Typhon*, or *Python*, as appears from some verses in *Homer*.*

Τὴν δ' αὐτὴ κατέπυσ' ἱμερὲν μὲν Ὀ-ηλίοιο
Ἐξ ἧ νῦν Πυθῶ κικλήσκειται· οἱ δ' ἀνὰ κτλ
Πύθιον καλέουσιν ἐπώνυμον.

Homer. Hymn. in Apoll. v. 372, 373, 374.

Vid. *Ovid. Metamorph. l. i. fab. 8. Hygin. fab. 140.* Hence the city of *Delphos*, where was the oracle of *Apollo*, was called *Pytho*, *Pausan. l. 10. p. 619.* The she prophet that sat on the golden *Trípodes*, and delivered out the oracles, *Pythia*, the place of the oracle *Pythium*, and the feasts and plays instituted to the honour of *Apollo*, *Pythii Indi & festa Pythia*, vid. *Alex. ab Alex. Genial Dierum, l. 6. c. 2.*

Christ,

Christ, to come out of her, and he came out of her the same hour. The old serpent not being able to stand before the seed of the woman, Christ Jesus, in the ministry of his apostles.

The power of Satan over the bodies of men in the land of *Judaea*, was very considerable about the time of Christ's being upon earth: It was a strange and uncommon dispensation; doubtless, those frequent and numerous possessions by devils were suffered, that the Son of God might have an opportunity of giving full proof both of his Deity and Messiahship. It is certain, that he went about, and healed all that were possessed with devils; they were obliged to quit their habitations at his order; he dispossessed them where-ever he came; they dreaded him, as their tormentor and destroyer; he turned out a legion of them at once from one man; the whole posse of them was not able to stand before him. Since those times, 'tis remarkable that possessions of this kind have been very rare; which shews that the seed of the woman has bruised the serpent's head, and crushed this part of his power. Christ has not only dispossessed Satan of the bodies of men by his power, but of the souls of many by his gospel, both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*, has delivered them from the power of darkness, and translated them into his own kingdom.

The author of the *epistle* to the *Hebrews* observes, that the devil had *the power of death* formerly; this may be ascribed unto him, because

cause he introduced sin into the world, which brought in death; he tempts to sin, and then accuses of it, and terrifies for it with the fears of death; and, in the Old Testament-dispensation, he was sometimes employed by the Lord to inflict death upon offenders; he was God's executioner of it, so we read of *some who murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer*; the destroying angel, the angel of death, as the *Jews* were used to call the devil; by reason of this multitudes in that day were under a servile spirit, and, *through fear of death* in this way, *were all their life-time subject to bondage*. But now this power of Satan's is crushed, which he had either by usurpation or permission; the serpent's head is bruised; Christ, the seed of the woman, has took into his own hands *the keys of hell and death*.

I take no notice of Satan's being called, *'The prince of the power of the air'*, because that does not refer to any power he has, or ever had, over the air in raising of winds, and the like; but of his dominion and government over the rest of the devils, who have their dwelling in the territories of the air, until they receive their final doom.

Once more: As the head is the seat of wisdom, by the serpent's head, and the bruising of it, may be meant his cunning and crafty

¹ 1 Cor. x. 10.

² Eph. ii. 2.

schemes, all which have been, or shall be baffled and confounded by Christ, the seed of the woman. He once formed a scheme to ruin all mankind, which was drawn with so much cunning, and managed with so much craft and subtlety, that it succeeded so far, as that he thought all was sure; when, on a sudden, it was declared, that a Saviour was provided, who, in due time, was sent into the world, and saved his people from sin, law, hell, and death. He forms another scheme to take away the life of Christ: This was so craftily laid, as to succeed; but then, through the death of him, Satan, who had the power of death, is destroy'd. When the gospel was carried into the *Gentile* world, he opposed it, with all the cunning he was master of: He stirred up the greatest wits of the age against it, but all in vain; for it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe; and tho' the apostles preached Christ crucified to the Jews, a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God, and mauer all the opposition made against their doctrines, the weapons of their warfare were not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations; and every high thing that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Satan is still framing many

many devices and stratagems against the saints; and makes use of many artful wiles and methods to ensnare their souls, distress their minds, and disturb their peace; he lays many snares and temptations in their way; but Christ, the seed of the woman, as he has both an ability and a heart to succour them that are tempted, so he will never suffer them to be tempted above that they are able, but will, with the temptation also, make a way to escape; and, in a little time, as he has bruised the serpent's head under himself, so he will bruise it under the feet of his saints; they shall never more be hurt or harrass'd by that enemy of their souls.

In a word, the whole empire of Satan is crushed by the Messiah; he's no more the god of this world, as he was before the Messiah's coming; the prince of this world, is judged, condemned, and cast out, and will still have less power than he now has, when the Lord shall be King over all the earth, and his name one; which will be when the Jews are converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in.

There's but one thing more to be taken notice of, and that is the bruising of the Messiah's heel by the serpent, which is the other part of the event, following the enmity, hatred, and war, between the devil and the seed of the woman. Some think, by the Messiah's heel,

Vid. Mead's Works, Book I. Discourse 39. p. 299.

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is meant hypocrites, who profess to be members of Christ's body, and are not, whom Satan gets an advantage over, draws with his tail, and casts down to the earth; but the heel of Christ, though it is the lowest part of his body, yet it is a part of it, which hypocrites are not. Others think, that the people of Christ, his members on earth are designed, who are exposed to persecutions, raised by Satan and his emissaries, against whom they kick, and sometimes bruise. But, perhaps, some slight trouble, which Christ himself met with from Satan, may be intended; such as his temptations in the wilderness, where he fasted forty days and forty nights, from whence he was carried by the devil into the holy city, and set upon a pinnacle of the temple, and from thence to an exceeding high mountain; or his agony in the garden, his conflict with the prince of darkness there, when his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground, and his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; or rather by the heel of Christ may be meant his human nature, which as his divine nature is the head and chief in him, this is the heel, the inferior and lowest nature in him, and what was frequently exposed to Satan's insults, temptations, and persecutions, and which he much struck at; and so far prevailed, as to bring him to a shameful and an accursed death; *the iniquity of his heels*, the sins of his people, which he bore

bore in his own body on the tree, then *compassing him about*; but though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God; and though he was put to death in the flesh, yet quicken'd in the Spirit, whereby he got an entire victory over Satan, and became the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.

From the whole of this passage we may learn, that the Messiah was to be God and man, to suffer, die, and rise again, and so become the Saviour of his people: If he had not been man, he would not have had a *heel* to be bruised; and if he had not been God, he could not have bruised the head of the serpent; His sufferings are fitly expressed by the bruising of his heel; his resurrection from the dead, after which he ascended on high, and led captivity captive, by his bruising the serpent's head; and, from the whole, it appears that he is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. I have done; I conclude my subject.

It may now be expected that I should say something concerning the deceased, whose death has occasioned this discourse. I understand she was averse to great and long encomiums; and, for my own part, I ever had a disinclination to them: However, what I shall say in this way upon the testimony of those
that

that knew her, I believe, is just, and to be depended on. It pleased God to call her, by his grace, very early, and to engage her heart betimes to give up her self not only to the Lord, but to a church of Christ, by the will of God, to walk with his people in all the ordinances of the gospel; and as it was through the preaching of the doctrines of grace that she was at first wrought upon, so she ever retained a value for them, and an esteem of them. God, in his providence, indulged her with a plenty of worldly substance, but this fulness was without forgetfulness of her God, or pride and haughtiness towards her fellow creatures. As she was of an easy temper and disposition, and in easy circumstances of life, so the former was without indolence, and the latter not without industry. She had firmness and resolution of mind, both in the affairs of religion, and in the things of life, but without obstinacy and stubbornness. She was constant and zealous in the exercise of religious duties, but without dependance on them, or ostentation in them. In her last hours, this passage of scripture I have been discoursing from, and indeed the whole chapter, were very refreshing to her, when, as she said, the adversary was very busy; but Christ, the seed of the woman, who has bruised the serpent's head, appeared to her relief, and graciously assured her, that he that comes to him, he will in no wise cast out, and that

of Mrs. MARTHA GIFFORD. 39

that he had loved her with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving kindness had drawn her to himself; from whence there is reason to conclude a comfortable and well-grounded hope of her everlasting salvation and happiness; wherefore it becomes her relatives and friends, not to sorrow as others, which have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

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